

# Gender Fictions and Gender Tensions Involving “Traditional” Asante Market Women

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**Abstract:** This paper analyses the changing relations between organised women market traders and rulers in a West African context, from a distant past to the present. It shows how political elites have used market traders as loyal supporters and as scapegoats for many centuries. These relations have taken a convoluted path that alternates between alliance and repression, in the context of shifts in the political and economic environment. Notorious episodes of price control and market demolitions from 1979 to 1984 are only the most dramatic moments in a long history of official intervention in trade and suspicion of prominent traders. Protecting traders as local citizens alternated with attacking traders as scapegoats for the ills and frustrations of national economic life. The paper focuses on “traditional” forms of organisation among market women, describing their political role, in terms of their interactions between their female leaders and the authorities. It shows how the constant need for negotiation reinforced group loyalty and how such forms of organisation have displayed resilience and adapted to various economic and political shifts.

## Introduction

The West African market woman is one of the most prominent iconic figures in the ethnography and journalism of the whole region. From the earliest travelers’ accounts to modern popular culture, she appears as a figure who symbolizes both devoted maternity and irreconcilable difference.<sup>1</sup> Her public persona of aggressive, shameless persistence in the pursuit of profit was perhaps somewhat unsettling to European gender assumptions and to Europeanized African aspirations. Southern Ghanaian towns, including Accra (the capital) and Kumasi (the second largest city), reported in the most recent census figures that nearly 80 percent of the adult female population works as traders. Her continuing economic centrality at the heart of expanding West African economies was equally unsettling to abstract development models that assumed progress through stages to modernity.

Yet the same characteristics make women traders difficult to digest culturally in many other parts of the world.<sup>2</sup> Even more often, bitter and occasionally violent conflicts flare up between market and street traders and city governments over urban land use, profiteering and

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v11i2-3a4.pdf>

licensing issues.<sup>3</sup> Newspaper reports from across Africa (Zimbabwe, Malawi, Cote d’Ivoire, and most recently Nairobi) put market and street traders at the center of many appalling incidents of violence, whether by rebellious youth or by a government acting against unruly economic sectors. The market and the street are global metaphors for public opinion, but they also operate as material venues for the contestation of central government policies that impact the daily fight by ordinary Africans for survival and political expression.

The longstanding dominance of marketplace systems in the West African regional economy challenges the assumption that today’s global informalization is a unique and recent process. For centuries, these systems managed international trade across the Sahara and through the Atlantic Coast, a trade that shaped the economic and cultural institutions of West Africa in so many ways. Governing leaders were expected to promote the prosperity of their constituencies by fostering trade, yet successive governments were often suspicious of traders’ wealth and influence. Besides gathering people and products destined for export, markets redistributed crops and other key resources across the ecological boundary between forest and grassland. Substantial continuities can be traced through today’s markets with the locations, connections, identities and trading practices of years past.

Yet these markets do not simply perpetuate a timeless tradition because it is all their people know or can imagine. Aspects of Ghana’s markets that are now firmly enthroned as traditional, such as the “market queens,” evolved into their present forms at specific historical moments, in response to concrete economic pressures. The gender and ethnic demography of trade, the credit and transport patterns in specific commodities, and markets can all be shown to have changed dramatically, even within living memory. In fact, the strong networks of traders, organized around shared commodity and locality interests, enable them to adapt more quickly and smoothly to abrupt shifts in commercial policy, food supply, consumer demand, and the labor market.

In Kumasi, consumers in the 1970s and 80s were not loyal customers of open markets because of cultural conservatism or unfamiliarity with more “modern” grocery and department stores. The more rigid relationships and procedures of the formal sector, inspired and to some degree enforced by Western business, proved less capable of dealing with the challenges of contemporary political and economic turbulence. Goods kept flowing through marketplace channels when store shelves were bare. The “informal” sector maintained its organizational integrity and continuity while “formal” institutions were falling apart. Market and street traders provided lifesaving supplements to the employment, income, food and consumer goods that more official or formal sectors of the economy could not supply, but at the same time they constituted highly visible evidence of the inadequate performance of these “modern” sectors. These paradoxes kept traders and successive governments at each others’ throats, because neither could do without the other entirely.

## Research Methodology

Studying the membership organizations of Ghanaian market traders formed part of a larger enquiry into economic and other aspects of market life that began with dissertation research in 1978 and continues to the present. Details of leadership practices such as dispute settlement were documented most fully from 1978-80, during a period of full-time participant observation

and interviewing in Kumasi Central Market. I spent most days with traders in the market or accompanying them on buying trips to other rural supply areas or other regional markets. Three heads of state followed each other, with General Akuffo in 1978, including the first brief term in office of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings from June to December 1979, and ending with elected President Hillal Limann in office in 1980. These regime changes enabled close observation of interactions between market leaders and both military and civilian officials. The effect of price controls and other commercial policy changes on ordinary traders was also evident in their personal accounts and a sample survey of the central portion of the market, conducted in 1979.<sup>4</sup>

Information on historical trends comes from combining ethnographic and archival sources. Dramatic enforcement strategies such as beatings, market demolitions, and confiscation of traders' goods stimulated much discussion of current and past market conditions. Older and more experienced traders commented on how these episodes intensified police practices seen intermittently over the past several decades since they had started trading. Likewise, further fieldwork with Kumasi traders on other subjects since 1980 indicates that the general outlines of group activity remain recognizable, although adapting to the changing political and economic environment. Searching archival collections at the Asantehene's Record Office in Kumasi and the National Archives branches in Accra and Kumasi turned up petitions from traders to colonial officers and the Asantehene over Kumasi market disputes, wartime price controls, and market construction and taxation policies during the colonial period.<sup>5</sup>

Additional periods of fieldwork in Ghana enabled me to monitor changing economic and political conditions and their effects on market trade. Subsequent projects related to rural crop processing and women traders brought me back to Kumasi during 1982-4, 1990-1, 1994-5, 1999, and 2006. An ILO consultancy kept me in Ghana during 1983, when the second government of Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings brought the most intense attacks on traders and their national marketplace system. Life histories of older Asante women traders, recorded in 1994-5, gave especially rich information from market leaders and on the first half of the twentieth century. Some elderly women were able to recall stories from their mothers about times before the British came. Reorganization made archival collections more accessible and brought to light additional documents related to trade. The already rich historical scholarship on precolonial and colonial Asante continued to multiply, while over the years my ethnographic record itself became a kind of historical document in itself. These opportunities for long-term research and the relatively deep historical record allow the identification of trends in market organization and leadership throughout the long twentieth century.

### **Market Commodity Groups**

The market woman has been an icon of West African trading traditions in ethnographers' and travelers' accounts since Europeans first began to visit the Guinea Coast.<sup>6</sup> The self-confidence and group solidarity of women traders impressed them partly because it contradicted European gender stereotypes, although comparable enclaves were not unknown in the European informal

sector. The resilience and persistence of traders in the face of intermittently hostile colonial and national policy initiatives and other difficult conditions testified to their vital economic role. The same difficulties generated powerful loyalties among traders to their organizations based on local markets and long-distance networks. Leaders and elders provide valuable services on a daily basis which their members could not easily do without, and orchestrate responses to serious crises that preserve critical resources.

Markets throughout Ghana were organized along consistent lines when this research began in 1978.<sup>7</sup> Each basic group was identified with a single local market, but only the smallest markets had one group for all traders. In any larger market (and certainly Kumasi Central Market, the largest single market in the country) the basic units were further specialized by the commodity or range of goods that its members sold. Market commodity group leaders were elected by each group’s council of elders from within their ranks. For smaller groups the elders comprise all mature traders over about forty years of age, while in larger groups this category of mature traders votes for representative elders who constitute their council. These same elders can remove a leader for malfeasance, but she normally serves for life.

Qualities considered positive in a potential candidate include her long experience in the market, her good reputation among her colleagues for reliability and honesty, and her demonstrated skill in settling minor disputes among her immediate neighbors as an elder. Any influential connections to the palace, the government, or a political party are legitimate assets because she may tap them later for group advantage as well as for getting elected. Daughters, nieces, and granddaughters of previous group queens gain valuable knowledge and connections by assisting them while in office. Such a descendant rarely succeeds directly, but often becomes a leader later in life.

The Kumasi Central Market commodity groups generally included the retailers who had stalls or tables in the market itself, the travelers, who brought goods in from various supply areas, and the wholesalers, who received shipments from travelers for resale to retailers. Integrating these three categories of traders into one group meant that most buying and selling transactions took place between traders answerable to the same leader. Primary competitors also would normally be members of the same group. Thus, the interactions most likely to motivate bad behavior or give rise to disputes took place between two group members. Instead of undermining group solidarity, this structured internal heterogeneity made it more useful to each subgroup of members and thus reinforced their loyalty.

Like wholesalers, the queens need to be constantly available in the market, so they are often drawn from the ranks of wholesalers. When homebound due to age and frailty, a commodity queen usually chooses a deputy to perform her duties until she actually dies. This deputy does not automatically replace her, nor does her daughter or granddaughter inherit the position, but the successor must be selected by the elders. A market queen should have some success as a trader, to demonstrate her competence and maintain a respectable public image, but the wealthiest wholesalers tend not to seek this office. Their time is too valuable for generating income to spend it on settling minor quarrels and attending meetings and funerals to represent the group. On the way up, they may well have suppressed the character traits of impartiality, calmness, and sympathy desired for group leadership.

Powerful group loyalties were clearly anchored in dispute settlement services, which were

consistently mentioned first in interviews with leaders, elders, and followers alike. Settling market disputes on-site was much quicker and cheaper than any available alternative, whether provided by a chief, policeman, or magistrate. One trader explained that it would cost her less to lose a case in the market than to win a case in court, considering the time lost, possible bribes, lawyers' pay, and other legal fees. Traders who were "known" to the commodity queen could expect fair treatment and a judge fully aware of their commercial realities. Many market conventions like bargaining procedures, steady customer privileges, and space allocation had no legal standing in national or chiefly courts. They could only be enforced among traders whose businesses depended on returning to trade in the same location regularly. Traders needed to remain in good standing with the commodity queen so that they could bring their own disputes to her in the future. Refusal to abide by a leader's decision was taken more seriously than the original offense, and punished by ostracism and/or fines paid to the market queen herself. In one such case, bystanders commented that the offending trader would be ashamed to show her face in the Kumasi Market again, and that others would hesitate to do business with her.

This peer pressure not only enforced commercial conventions but facilitated the extension of credit among members. Wholesalers could extend credit to retailers who were fellow group members with some degree of confidence that they would abide by the commodity queen's judgment if problems arose. Short term credit was a critical factor to maintaining a smooth flow of goods through the high-volume wholesale yards in Kumasi Central Market. The direction of credit changed seasonally for most foodstuffs, so that today's creditor might be asking for credit herself before the year's end. Outside trading partners, including farmers, would also extend credit more freely to Kumasi traders because they could also bring a bad debt case before the trader's group leader. One defaulting trader was excoriated in 1979 for trying to frighten her farmer creditor away; by saying the market queen would have him beaten. Traders observing the case commented that this was not only a personal insult to the queen's character but would also hurt fellow traders by making farmers in general more reluctant to give them goods on credit.

Market leadership institutions incorporate organizational features from a variety of models active within the local community, most notably ethnic traditions. The great majority of traders in Kumasi Central Market sell local foodstuffs. In most of these groups, Asante women predominate, and they draw on Asante chiefly traditions to legitimate their status. Their procedures of dispute settlement, election, and indirect speech on very formal occasions reflect values of consultation and mutual consent very central to the broader Akan culture. These market queens are titled (*ôhemma*) like the renowned Queen Mother of Asante, but not linked explicitly to the chiefship hierarchy that pairs male and female chiefs at each level. Where Asante men predominate, mostly in craft groups, they seem more careful to avoid the equivalent male title (*ôhene*) without palace precedent. Commodities sold mainly by men or women from Northern ethnic groups, including butcher meat, chickens, shea butter and kola, appropriate the Hausa terminology for male leaders (*sarkin*) and female leaders (*magazia*). Kola traders described the dispute settlement skills of their leader in terms linked to their Islamic modes of jurisprudence. He had the ability to tell who was lying, to see the truth, and decided cases based on firm, clear principles. Asante traders described a skillful leader as settling cases

so that they stayed settled, deciding on an outcome each side could live with. In times of public crisis, the male and/or Northern group leaders close ranks behind the yam queen. Though they have little interaction with the market queens in quiet times, they allow her to speak for them and represent the market as a whole.

Asante chiefship traditions also institutionalize specific forms of accountability that protect traders from arbitrary or autocratic leaders. No important case can be decided or policy decision made without consulting the elders extensively as part of the process. Disputes brought to the market queens are often appeals from a lower-level elder who has been unable to make a decision stick. Each party narrates their story of the events in question, fully and repeatedly, and consults their own sympathetic elders. The market queen, as in chiefly courts, only chimes in with her final pronouncement after all the elders present have proposed their own solutions in turn. The consensus emerging from increasingly senior elders becomes evident to the parties involved as well as the attentive leader. Whenever a market queen goes out on official business, even funeral attendance, she goes with two or more of her elders. They advise her, but they also keep her honest. They witness the course of events, potentially providing independent testimony that can report her underhanded actions or confirm the accuracy of her account. Two or three other commodity queens accompany the yam queen when she goes to represent the market as a whole.

Commodity groups also selectively incorporate elements of terminology and procedure from Christian church women’s fellowships, the co-operative movement, and trade unions. The council of elders is also referred to as the “committee,” with the market queen as president and other members appearing as vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant at arms or “police.”

Several of the larger groups had hired a male “secretary” who kept tactful minutes of meetings, issued membership cards, recorded dues payments in “passbooks,” and sometimes recorded credit transactions. With the increase in education levels among younger women, these men are now frequently replaced by one of the women traders when they retire. Drivers and butchers (virtually all male) registered as trade unions, although most of them were also self-employed. When government policies favored cooperatives for loans and other assistance, several commodity groups registered as cooperatives. By 2006, the neoliberal policy emphasis on entrepreneurship led a few of the more up-to-date traders to use the term “microenterprise.”

### **Deep Roots for Trade and Intervention**

The long history of political manipulation of trade in West Africa lends legitimacy to contemporary government interventions and recent aggressive commercial policies. A ruler’s responsibility for promoting the prosperity of loyal countrymen finds familiar or expected expression in protecting their commercial interests. Although the Asante were only under British colonial rule from 1898 to 1957, they drew upon a very deep Akan heritage of intercontinental trade. Caravans had linked Akans to North Africa across the Sahara since before Roman times, and these carried Arab merchants and chroniclers throughout the open grasslands at least from the tenth century AD.<sup>8</sup> Ivory, gold, kola nuts, and slaves from the forest region occupied by Akans were exchanged for cloth, blankets, leather, livestock, salt, metalware, and cowrie shell currency. Portuguese ships first reached the West African coast in

the fourteenth century, making regular trading voyages to Elmina, in present-day Ghana, and other port towns. Early Portuguese chroniclers noted that Akans supplied a large part of the gold, kola, and slaves available, using trading skills and capital developed in the caravan trade.<sup>9</sup>

Prominent early Africa traders in what is now Ghana included the Akanny, who organized a tight network of diaspora communities in towns throughout the area, with parallels to the Hanseatic League, still powerful then in Northern Europe, or the Aro-Chukwu financial network in Eastern Nigeria, organized around shrines.<sup>10</sup> At least until 1700, African local authorities tightly regulated and taxed trade, protecting the trading position of their citizens and playing different European nationalities off against each other as these jostled for exclusive access.<sup>11</sup> Long after coastal chiefs lost the power to forbid direct trade between European and inland traders, wealthy local intermediaries still provided essential services as credit references, landlords, brokers, and negotiators. Periodic foodstuffs markets fed the growing non-farming population and reprovisioned departing ships (even with “ship’s bread” baked from local grain.) DeMarees’ description of reserved spaces and commodity specialization in these markets suggests their organization along the lines of contemporary market groups.

As Akans moved deeper into the forest, they founded Kumasi to control existing trade routes leading to important market towns on the northern edge of the forest, such as Salaga and Bonduku. By the eighteenth century, the Asante Confederacy had coalesced around Kumasi, becoming the dominant imperial power in the region.<sup>12</sup> Its chiefs actively manipulated markets by closing their borders to hostile neighbors, expelling competitive foreigners, and invading uncooperative rivals to force market access. The male *Asantehene* and female *Asantehemma*, along with their major subordinate chiefs, participated in trade directly, through designated royal treasury officials who assembled trading caravans, and indirectly, by loaning money from their official treasuries to prominent private citizens for trade. These chiefs appointed officials who kept order and collected taxes in markets inside Asante, although most chiefs received food for their families and entourages as tribute from farm villages peopled by their subjects or slaves. Kumasi, the royal capital, had a more substantial commoner population, which bought its food and consumer goods in several markets.<sup>13</sup>

The British colonial government promoted the commercial interests of its own citizens and officials just as openly as the Asante had. They established the Gold Coast Colony over the first half of the nineteenth century in response to the petitions and manipulations of British traders reluctant to operate within a nascent Fante Confederacy. The reorganization of import trading along lines more favorable to Europeans began on the coast, where the larger European firms pushed aside the wealthy Africans and independent European traders during the early nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The passbook system replaced them with more reliably subordinate customers who deposited security with the firms and took that amount in goods for resale. Passbook holders were often illiterate women, while ambitious African men preferred the autonomy of the learned professions as lawyers, ministers, doctors, and bankers.<sup>15</sup>

Once they defeated the Asante in 1896, British colonial authorities dismantled the royal border controls and promised safe access for non-Asante traders and employees. The administration of trade through court officials and state loans collapsed, and British import and export firms now enjoyed privileged access to services and assets such as military protection, subsidized rail transport, credit, and prime downtown locations. Coastal ethnic groups and

Asante political exiles became the categories of African traders with the most capital and upward mobility. “Northerners” moved into Kumasi from Salaga and other grassland towns, extending their connections to trading networks for “Northern” commodities such as kola, livestock, and grain.<sup>16</sup> Asante men moved in large numbers into the lucrative and rapidly expanding cocoa industry, as farmers and brokers outside the marketplace system. This left market trading within Ashanti Region increasingly to women and to immigrant men from the Northern Territories and further afield.<sup>17</sup>

With this demographic shift came a surge of organizational innovation, as women and immigrant men needed to renegotiate their relationships with both British colonial officials and the Asante chiefly hierarchy, which retained considerable power under indirect rule. The first official record of a commodity group came as early as 1915, when smoked fish sellers (mainly Fante) in the overcrowded main market downtown met with city officers about sanitation and congestion.<sup>18</sup> Instead of rebuilding or expanding it, the city eventually moved the Central Market to a hastily filled swamp near the railway station with room for growth.<sup>19</sup> Elderly traders recalling the relocation process in 1979 described their group leaders preparing lists of bona fide traders and collecting money to build communal sheds or stalls.

During the 1930s and 1940s, pressures to negotiate with colonial officials over site access and fee schedules led to the formalization of the present system of commodity group organizations. Once colonial officers realized how promptly traders would pay rent for market stalls or daily ticket fees for market access, revenues from rebuilt markets became the mainstay of local government finances across Ashanti Region.<sup>20</sup> In order to retain this income stream, local officials compromised with market leaders on the enforcement of legal regulations that could interfere with business and promoted local traders over traders based elsewhere (except Britain).<sup>21</sup> In Kumasi, population growth brought a rapid expansion in the volume of foodstuffs traded, leading traders to found more commodity groups and organize new wholesale yards.

Once the British established colonial institutions like barracks, prisons, and schools they had a vested interest in keeping food prices low, so as to save money directly when buying food for them and indirectly by keeping wages low. During the First and Second World Wars, military recruitment and training raised market demand for food after siphoning off young men from the active farm labor force. The rising cost of living brought demands for wage increases in the military, civil service, and mines. British colonial authorities tried to enforce price controls in regional capitals and mining towns (including Kumasi and nearby Obuasi).<sup>22</sup>

They also intervened openly in the 1940s to protect the market share of the leading British firms, when wartime conditions made shipping risky and costly. Import quotas for individual firms were based on their percentage of trade before the war. Lebanese, Indian, and United States firms had no success arguing for higher quotas to compensate for British wartime shortages of goods and transport or postwar rationing. British firms asked successfully for higher official prices that covered their rising costs.<sup>23</sup>

### **Nationalist Alliances**

The struggle for independence brought a solid and visible alliance between Gold Coast nationalists and market traders. Nationalist politicians defended market traders against British charges of causing price inflation and noted the much looser price control enforcement on

imports by European firms than by Lebanese and African importers. African economic resentment was directed towards the British authorities and firms, giving ordinary traders the position of fellow victims.

One of the first Gold Coast collective actions that attracted wide international attention was the cocoa boycott of 1936-7. After world cocoa prices fell sharply during the Great Depression, the few international firms buying cocoa for export agreed to divide up the cocoa producing areas to avoid direct competition between their agents. The nationalists blamed these arrangements for the continuing price collapse, and convinced farmers and brokers to refuse to sell their cocoa. The cocoa holdup was so complete partly because its organizers also boycotted consumer goods imported by the same large firms who bought cocoa.<sup>24</sup> Market traders who sold these goods publicized and enforced that side of the boycott among the cocoa farmers' wives and mothers, whose demands for new cloths might have undermined their resolve. Just such family pressures eventually led laborers and caretakers to sell their shares of the cocoa harvest, and not return empty-handed to their villages far to the north.<sup>25</sup>

J. B. Danquah, the leading nationalist figure throughout the 1940s, praised market women as heroically devoted mothers, hardworking and underpaid.<sup>26</sup> Market women returned this support by collecting and contributing money for the nationalist parties, making speeches at their rallies and mobilizing their market colleagues and commercial contacts to support them.<sup>27</sup> Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) continued to draw on market women, among others, for financial and political support. Within a few years of independence in 1957, President Nkrumah had adopted not only colonial price controls but the colonial rhetoric that blamed selfish, parasitic traders for the high prices of food and consumer goods, with special condemnation of Lebanese and women traders.

Several of the market leaders interviewed during initial fieldwork (1978-80) had lived through this period of political party rivalry in the 1950s, just before and after independence, and most of them did not remember it as empowering. Each party tried to get their candidates elected as commodity group leaders when these offices came open, counting on them to deliver votes from their group members for the elections that began in 1951. Kumasi was a bastion of Danquah's Progress Party, which was associated with Asante chiefs and cocoa farmers. Less privileged urban residents more often supported the CPP. Each party maintained gangs of young men, who roamed through Kumasi intimidating supporters of the other by assaulting them, blowing up their houses, and the like.<sup>28</sup> These rival gangs rioted in Kumasi Central Market in January 1955, and market leaders made highly visible targets. Several of the older leaders mentioned they had had to leave town for their home villages and hide there for several years, until the violence died down. These memories discouraged several market leaders from declaring any party affiliation when elections were held again in 1979, and even as late as 1994. On the other hand, one elderly CPP loyalist cheerfully resumed her place as a commodity group leader when the election of President Limann returned the CPP network to power in October 1979 under its new name, the People's National Party (PNP).

Under Nkrumah's one-party banner of African Socialism in the 1960s, commercial policies turned increasingly hostile to independent traders. He nationalized an existing chain of department stores (Lebanese and not British-owned) to found the Ghana National Trading Corporation, which also had a food section. The most direct confrontation came from the Ghana

Food Distribution Corporation, which sold locally grown foodstuffs at its kiosks outside markets. The problems its male employees had securing supplies and avoiding spoilage of fresh produce still drew derisive comments from women traders in the 1980s. “They handled tomatoes like they were plantains. They had to ask their sisters how to trade.” While Nkrumah’s socialist initiatives never seriously challenged the commercial primacy of the marketplace organizations, they did monopolize public capital and policy support. Groups considered progressive or modern, including the state enterprises, trade unions, and professional associations, participated much more in what political or economic consultation remained under the one-party state.

Politicians meanwhile retained important patronage connections to the marketplace system. The sheer numbers of traders and their group cohesion made their backing valuable for collecting money and turning out crowds for rallies. Officials enjoying preferential access to imports or manufactures sold them for cash to the experienced traders willing to retail them openly. Market stalls, passbooks and “chits” (notes for allocations of factory goods and imports) made well-appreciated rewards for loyal political supporters, and also good severance gifts for ex-wives and girlfriends. Traders with long market careers complained about these inexperienced upstarts who made windfall profits, but they also cultivated their own relationships with store managers and police officers through kinship links or regular gifts.

Dr. Kofi Busia and his Progress Party won the election held after Nkrumah’s overthrow by a military coup in 1967, and remained in power from 1969 to 1972. President Busia was a champion of free-market policies, yet he still felt obligated to prove his good intentions immediately by enforcing price controls and arresting traders. His most famous initiative, the 1969 Aliens Compliance Order, could be interpreted as either attacking or supporting market traders.<sup>29</sup> Although it sparked an exodus of foreign cocoa laborers, Busia explained that the law was aimed at traders from Nigeria or Lebanon who had market stalls, or operated well below the level where foreign expertise or capital was arguably necessary. In Kumasi Central Market, a number of 1979 stallholders had acquired their stalls and other assets such as sewing machines very cheaply from foreigners leaving in a hurry in 1969. Although the expulsion made space for Ghanaian entrepreneurs in the short run, Nigeria later took its turn at expelling Ghanaians in 1983.

### **Military Rule (1972-79)**

Despite the contradictions inherent in their situation, or perhaps because of them, government policy towards market traders stabilized into a cyclical pattern during a series of military regime changes through the 1970s. After overthrowing President Busia in 1972, General Acheampong led the National Redemption Council (1972-5) and the Supreme Military Council (1975-8). Raiding episodes followed each reorganization of the governing coalition, a pattern hard to predict. Attacks on the usual targets would be followed by a period of recovery, when little attention was paid to the prices and sources of goods. Traders with sufficient capital could ride out such oscillations by charging a high enough markup during quiet times to compensate for what had been confiscated the last time. Close family or business ties to well-placed soldiers

also brought timely warnings to stay at home when a raid was planned.

Kumasi residents and traders reported a more predictable annual cycle of price control enforcement by 1978. In the fall, after the cocoa harvest put money in people's pockets and cocoa exports renewed the supply of foreign exchange in the Bank of Ghana, city market stalls filled with new stocks ready for Christmas shoppers. Around November, there was usually a price crackdown that lasted long enough for the soldiers to collect some money and make their own Christmas purchases at the lower official prices. Once they had finished shopping, the police and soldiers considerably left the markets alone, so that others could buy or sell without fear.<sup>30</sup>

The governing elite remained dependent on the continuing viability of the marketplace system for many unacknowledged services. Without smugglers and hoarders, this elite might run short of high-status foods, drinks and other luxury goods. The poor might be willing to rebel if they lacked the minimum level of subsistence goods still available through these markets, from overseas and local illegal sources. The market also offered the poorest citizens self-employment which, although underpaid, defused or at least dampened the time bomb of rising unemployment. Meanwhile, national leaders continued to deflect blame for the country's increasingly desperate economic situation from themselves onto the convenient stereotype of the wealthy woman trader. Price controls on imports and manufactures remained on the books, always available for enforcement whenever a display of political bravado was needed.

During the Acheampong period, corruption reached levels which even other military officers suspected was unsustainable. In July 1978, he was in turn overthrown by Lt. Colonel Akuffo, who also arrested other notorious public figures but did not impose dramatic punishments or fines commensurate with their gains. He ordered strict enforcement of existing price controls in July and again in November 1978, maintaining the episodic rhythm of market raids. His most innovative tactic, a total currency exchange in March 1979, did target hoards of cash held by corrupt ex-officials and wealthy traders, although arguably sparing those whose bank connections had stayed current.

These episodic raids respected another consistent limit: they always focused on the sections selling cloth and other imports or manufactured goods. Basic local foodstuffs were not standard enough in quality and quantity to set official prices easily, and perhaps the nationalist focus on international terms of trade had some lingering effect. These were the listed "essential commodities" subject to price controls, a category dating from the Second World War. Traders selling these had adapted to the high risk with unusual selling practices that restricted the display of goods and kept most of the stock at a safe distance. A handful of empty cans on a table indicated what canned food was available, once the buyer passed inspection. Another strategy, popular for rice and sugar, was for a wholesaler to hire or sponsor a retailer with no stall to sell from a metal basin on the ground. These were always young, strong men and women, who could run away fast when inspectors arrived. Cloth sellers with stalls in prime locations learned to open their doors only a few inches, sitting inside in the dark with only a half dozen pieces. The owner was always away when known or suspected spies tried to buy something. Traders with weak nerves reported deciding to sell local foodstuffs, which after all took up the majority of the market. Traders who flourished despite the pressure were reputed to have special protection, whether from family connections, magical paraphernalia, or so-called

“bottom power.”<sup>31</sup> Gender tensions within the lineage and in marriage and parental relations acted as a focal point for economic frustrations that threatened accepted normal standards of child support, meal preparation, mutual respect, and social commitment.<sup>32</sup> The iconic market woman presented a pre-positioned lightning rod and scapegoat for all that was wrong in the economy and at home.<sup>33</sup>

Commodity group leaders in cloth or provisions (packaged foods) had once been local notables, proud to display their authority in their base of operations. Now market leaders in these groups made such easy targets for arrest that they could not appear openly in the market to settle disputes or represent their group in public. Existing cloth and provisions leaders announced their retirement and stopped coming to market, one by one. Only a few decades before, market elections had been hotly contested, but now no one else was willing to accept these positions, and be identified as one of “those” wealthy traders. Even basic member services could hardly be maintained, such as dispute settlement or representation at funerals or negotiations, unless leaders could be accessible and speak openly. The long hiatus left these groups slow to revive, even after price controls were officially dropped in 1984. Only the yam queen still had an annual Christmas interview on national television, describing the abundance of yams amid scenes of holiday shoppers thronging Kumasi Central Market.

Under military rule, published rhetoric denouncing market women became more and more extreme. In newspaper articles and letters, the image of the poor, hard-working mother trader dropped out of usage entirely, displaced by the evil “market queen.”<sup>34</sup> She could be a group leader or simply a wealthy wholesaler, but the media demonized her for her relative success in preserving a reliable income, compared to people who deserved it more: salaried, better educated formal sector employees (predominantly male). As the Ghanaian economy continued to deteriorate, real incomes plummeted with no credible policy response. These diatribes constructed even ordinary traders as grasping viragos responsible for every kind of economic hardship, “big cheats and nation wreckers.”<sup>35</sup> Such discourse created an atmosphere that permitted physical repression of traders to intensify rapidly.

## Markets under Attack

The pattern of episodic price control raids on imports and manufactures traders persisted while Acheampong was succeeded by Akuffo in 1978, then Akuffo by Rawlings under the brief 1979 Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) regime and then Rawlings by President Limann after the 1979 election. Flight-Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings had significantly intensified the pattern from June to October 1979, but it quickly reasserted itself after his handover to elected civilian rule. The AFRC “housecleaning exercise” still invoked the corrupt or wealthy trader as the targeted “hoarder,” but reached far beyond the familiar list of “essential commodities” with published official prices.<sup>36</sup>

Soldiers in Kumasi now also took over formal sector stores and market locations devoted to local foodstuffs, not just cloth and imports. They sold off all sorts of goods at prices they set on

the spot, often by figuring one half or one tenth the previous price. Confiscations and forced sales destroyed many Kumasi traders' capital, and a handful endured public flogging. Those traders with any capital left tried to keep it safe by suspending trade; as long as they had savings to live on they could stay home. The poorest traders, who lived hand to mouth and took goods on supplier credit, were disproportionately exposed to these dangers. They had to keep coming in and trying to earn something, even under the least promising and riskiest conditions, or go hungry with their families. Market leaders scrambled to find a strategy that moderated the increasingly arbitrary price controls and unpredictable violence facing their desperate constituents.

The yam queen and her colleagues tried to negotiate official prices for local foodstuffs, since none had existed before, so traders who abided by them could then avoid harassment. They sought out meetings with the Market Manager, the Kumasi Metropolitan Authority and even the Regional Commissioner, as relatively neutral senior authorities who could set price levels in public that enforcers would have to accept. Unfortunately their authority over military personnel proved unreliable. After market leaders invested considerable time in listing quality grades and agreeing on prices for sample specimens, they discovered that soldiers in the market ignored these price lists. If traders had reduced their prices in advance, the soldiers still cut them to one-half or one-quarter the new price.

By contrast, male occupational groups in and around Kumasi received very different treatment from the AFRC during price control enforcement. Truck drivers, spare parts dealers, butchers, and adinkra cloth printers, among others, negotiated their official price levels in relation to prices for their inputs. The military authorities had approached them to start talks before their control prices were announced, and the prices agreed upon were then respected.

Military authorities also summoned the market queens to ad hoc meetings with delegations of farmers or soldiers, but these were quite different from meetings with male groups. Elderly market queens complained of the time and energy consumed by frequent meetings, but all the market elders complained bitterly of the disrespect they faced in the meetings called by soldiers. Despite the attendance of civilian government officials, traders found that the promised negotiations were a sham. The most basic conventions of negotiation and dispute settlement were violated. The time and place were set unilaterally; the soldiers in fact commandeered the commodity group meeting room in the middle of a peak trading day. Most outrageously, the policy decisions had already been taken and were simply being announced, with no opportunity for traders to state their case in a meaningful way or propose alternatives. Traders were subjected to humiliating harangues---"they speak to us like we are children, when we are old enough to be their mothers!" Their carefully honed negotiating skills were tacitly dismissed and rendered useless and besides, "how can you talk to a gun?" The chances of positive participation in any kind of political process seemed very remote.

As the handover to civilian rule approached, Rawlings made one last effort to leave a lasting mark on the national marketplace system. On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1979, Makola #1, the most famous market in Accra, was blown up with dynamite, and those in each regional capital faced demolition over the next several days. Kumasi City Council members reportedly argued successfully with the soldiers there to demolish only the outlying sections and spare the oldest section, within the original walls. Still, incoming President Limann found it necessary to

validate his political credentials with a new episode of strict enforcement of price control regulations soon after taking office in October 1979.

When the December 31 Revolution in 1981 returned Flt. Lt. Rawlings to power as head of state with his People’s National Defence Council (PNDC) regime, he immediately reinstated the extra-legal confiscations and violent harassment of the AFRC period. Since I was living in Accra (the coastal capital) from 1982-84 and traveling to aid project villages in different regions, I could observe events in various parts of the country and monitor their impact on villagers as well as passing through Kumasi repeatedly. Interactions between commodity group leaders and the regime reached a new low point in 1982-3 during this early PNDC period. This time, Rawlings seemed determined to destroy or at least dethrone the marketplace system permanently.

The PNDC made strenuous efforts to set up parallel distribution channels that would bypass market traders altogether. Possessing commercial quantities of food was grounds for arrest, and considered *prima facie* evidence of hoarding. Each farm village was exhorted to organize a Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), which would sell their produce directly to institutions and consumer cooperatives from urban neighborhoods. At first, soldiers brought trucks out with cloths, soap and cutlasses to sell to CDRs at controlled prices, providing free transport both ways. These benefits generated some enthusiasm among farmers, but once the goods ran out and CDRs started charging for transport, farmers stopped cooperating. Newspaper reports began denouncing traders for appearing in villages with trucks loaded with consumer goods for sale and offering farmers high prices— all very unpatriotic.

It was the dry season of a second drought year by 1983, not a good time to remove price incentives.<sup>37</sup> The repatriation of a million Ghanaian immigrants expelled from Nigeria in February 1983 further stressed the food system. One mother described to me coming in to Kumasi Central Market with money and bursting into tears, because there was nothing to buy to make dinner for her family. Urban food supplies dried up almost completely for several months, leading to the prominent collarbones covertly referred to as “Rawlings’ necklace.” Soldiers were as hungry as anyone and began to hijack food trucks from the highways that passed by their barracks, making farmers and traders nervous of traveling at all.<sup>38</sup>

The ideological shift that turned any market traders’ organization into a sinister conspiracy made any gesture towards consultation or even negotiation with market women more and more unthinkable. Without announcing any policy reversal, the PNDC quietly began to allow traders to bring and sell foodstuffs in the cities again by late 1983. Resuming the familiar episodic enforcement pattern tacitly acknowledged that the new distribution channels could not do the job of feeding the nation.

### **Market Deregulation**

By 1984, Rawlings capitulated to international financial and diplomatic pressures and accepted the neoliberal austerity measures recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). While perhaps motivated by national bankruptcy rather than the leaders’ change of heart, the thoroughness with which the PNDC implemented the already familiar list of IMF loan conditionalities soon made Ghana famous. Price controls and foreign exchange controls were dismantled, bringing consequences similar to those seen elsewhere. Austerity measures

required to balance the budget brought massive layoffs of government employees and drastic cuts in health and education services. The buying power of the typical middle or lower-class market patron was sharply limited by such policies for “demand constraint” and “cost recovery.” World Bank publications featured Ghana prominently as a structural adjustment success story, offering a good example to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

On the positive side, traders saw a welcome end to the physical violence of police raids and fear of confiscations. Renewed access to credit and aid funded long-needed infrastructure projects that resurfaced major highways and city streets. Rebuilding the drains that ran through the Central Market took years, but eventually the market no longer flooded regularly and spoiled traders’ stock. Gasoline rationing ended, so transport was readily available to whoever could afford it. This greatly reduced the search effort for specialized travelers, although raising the capital requirements for efficient trading.

The promised surges in foreign direct investment and in innovative local entrepreneurship unfortunately failed to materialize. Despite Ghana’s GDP growth, the living standards of ordinary people hardly budged due to the increasing polarization of income distribution. The same export sectors that colonial policy had favored (gold, cocoa, and timber) received the lion’s share of World Bank investment capital under their new designation of “comparative advantage.” These are also the very production sectors whose income is most concentrated in the hands of a small proportion of their participants, and whose owners and employees are predominantly men.<sup>39</sup> New technology in the gold mines raised output but reduced manpower requirements.

As private formal sector employment shrank, partly under pressure from newly plentiful imports, unemployed or never employed workers flooded into the marketplace and the streets. The influx of young men into occupations like vegetable trading, previously coded female, was highly visible at the market’s edges. Dividing up the restricted pool of consumer demand among more people meant even lower incomes for existing traders. Market traders found the new open economy did not open up much viable space for them, and increased income polarization and capital dependency among their own ranks.

Legalization also did not end traders’ political isolation. While they might be off the political hot seat, their concerns still were virtually excluded from development planning or assistance. The much replicated Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) began in Ghana in 1987, but it specifically disqualified traders from its 1988 small loan program aimed to encourage entrepreneurship and risk-taking.<sup>40</sup> Market repairs moved as slowly and corruptly as ever, and traders’ material interests seemed to be ignored as completely as ever. Those trading in the outer precincts of the marketplace, who operate from flimsy stalls or stop for a few hours in a regular spot, remained subject to repeated clearances, with little warning despite the rent they paid to the city.

### **Political Inclusion Begins**

Some examples suggest that market traders may be making progress towards more political integration as the country settles into a stable electoral democracy. In 1989, women traders from Accra began to appear on a few government advisory and planning commissions. A few traders

won seats on rural district assemblies through local government elections again held in 1989. Under decentralization measures district assemblies operate in local languages and control some funds.<sup>41</sup> Traders’ organizational representatives also joined those appointed in 1991 to the constituent assembly convened to draft a new constitution before the return to national elections.

In Kumasi, the yam queen was also appointed for one term to a city council seat not filled by election and still enjoyed her air-conditioned office in 1994. Debates were always held in English, which she did not understand, so she sat near a family friend who could translate for her. She was satisfied with her own occasional remarks, considering them analogous to the final summing-up by the senior chief presiding over a traditional council. The family friend, conversely, reported that educated members ignored her comments, so they had little impact on council decisions.

A local Kumasi registered non-governmental organization, the Center for the Development of People (CEDEP) made several interventions intended to raise awareness and respect for market women. Its Women’s Forum collected life stories of successful local women as inspiring examples in 1995, deliberately including the yam queen in the Women’s Forum launch celebration and an eventual publication. A subsequent CEDEP initiative organized participative workshops for market leaders at which they prioritized their problems and identified potential solutions and partners. A corresponding workshop for city officials at the Kumasi Metropolitan Authority aimed to raise their awareness of traders’ contribution to local development, stressing that approximately half the total city budget came from market revenues.<sup>42</sup>

Increased official awareness did not negate the underlying political inequalities and tensions. City officials reacted in 1999 by trying to squeeze even more money out of traders with a dubious security guard scheme. Market leaders had already stated flatly that real progress was unlikely under the longtime city council chairman. Regardless of that (unrecorded) consensus, the assessment exercise may have stiffened their resolve to reject the security guard proposal. In June 2006, a new city leader had not been in office long enough to make long term policy changes evident.

Without the burden of overt government hostility, however, the long history of local rulers promoting local prosperity through trade seemed to slowly reassert itself during the 1990s. Some chiefs of farming districts growing local food crops for sale tried to protect the commercial territory of their hometown traders against urban-based buyers. Techiman and Gonja chiefs, at different times, forbade Kumasi yam traders from buying directly from farmers in villages or town markets, insisting they buy through local traders. In these instances, urban/rural and north/south rivalries overshadowed the occupational divide between traders and farmers. Traders based in small towns and villages are also more often farmers themselves.

A violent confrontation between tomato buyers from the southern cities and tomato farmers from the distant Upper East Region, indicates women traders may now be regaining some access to government officials. These traders (from the national capital, Accra, and nearby southern cities) successfully asked high-ranking public officials to intervene on short notice. The leader of one of the traders’ associations advised me that she took a cell phone call reporting the attack from one of the traders from her town who was there. She immediately headed for Accra to alert her superior, head of the National Tomato Traders’ Association, who had already been

informed by her Accra colleagues who were in the group ambushed near Paga.<sup>43</sup> Within hours, they were able to contact national and regional officials to ensure police protection and mediate the dispute.

These farmers grew dry season tomatoes on the irrigation projects fed by the Volta River. Promises that a long-defunct tomato cannery nearby would be rehabilitated had induced them to plant in large quantities that year. Some had sold or mortgaged assets like land to finance larger farms, expecting a higher price from the cannery. Meanwhile, women traders from the southern cities had organized to buy tomatoes in bulk across the nearby border in Burkina Faso, as customs agreements allowed. When the harvest started but the cannery was not ready to buy, farmers were desperate. The Member of Parliament for that area spoke on the house floor of riots and suicides.<sup>44</sup>

These remote farmers had little leverage to hasten the power lines towards their local cannery, but the roads from Burkina Faso brought the more vulnerable traders right through their villages. On March 1, a group of male farmers blockaded the Paga border post, trapping traders with at least 41 of their tomato trucks. After local police escorted these trucks through the nearest large town, Navrongo, farmers ambushed them again farther south, stealing the traders' money and cell phones and sending several traders to the hospital.<sup>45</sup>

The incident brought an immediate response from regional and national officials, starting with the Upper East Regional Security Council, the Regional Director of Agriculture, the Deputy Regional Minister, and the Regional Minister. Before a week had passed, the President of the National Tomato Traders and Transporters Association had extended a compromise offer to farmers and concluded impressive negotiations in Bolgatanga and Accra that involved the Minister of Trade, the Minister of Food and Agriculture, and the President of the National Farmers and Fishermen Award Winners Association. The agreement announced March 7 set up procedures for local purchases and imports that accommodated traders and farmers but paid little heed to international treaties or free market principles.<sup>46</sup> It was hard to imagine in 1990 or 1999 that public figures of this stature would be openly sitting down with traders' leaders, willing to indicate that degree of respect for their perspectives only a few years later.

## Conclusion

The complex historical dynamics of market organizations in Ghana show a continuing ambivalence in the relations between individual traders, their local commodity groups, and the various governments that have sought to control them. Notorious episodes of price control and market demolitions from 1979 to 1984 were only the most dramatic moments in a long series of interventions in trade that public opinion often legitimated. Meanwhile, market rents and daily fees supplied a steady source of public revenue that funded local government institutions. Traders' tenacious resistance to regulation and the resilience of their autonomous organizations advertised the limits of government control of the economy. The shifting contours of this contestation shaped traders' organizational and ideological strategies throughout the twentieth century.

The identification of the occupation of trading with women and men, with Asante and with Northern and foreign ethnic groups, and with contingent nationalist agendas has been an

effective connection in drawing hostility towards traders at successive historical junctures. Underlying contestations over relations based on class, race, nationality, and urban or rural residence seem to intensify this hostility, in spite of not following any simple correspondence with categories of traders or specific punitive actions. The degree and even the direction of these identifications lacked stability in both the demography of the trading population of Kumasi and its ideological positioning. Traders acted as a convenient target for expressing and for deflecting frustrations that rose from a wide range of social contradictions throughout the last century. Gender often figured conspicuously in such constellations of hostility surrounding traders. Not nearly representing a binary opposition between women and men, the diverse gender roles of women as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, not to mention as queen mothers, schoolgirls, and temptresses, were precisely what enabled gender to resonate in such powerful ways with economic frustrations. The economic landscape was equally complex and contradictory, including relations that linked and opposed persons and interests across multiple cross-cutting dimensions. The contradictory allegiances engendered by gender relations for both women and men were diverse enough to offer parallels to many of the thorniest local and global dilemmas that entangle them as Ghanaians and continue to do so. Any of them might be invoked by attacking traders as “those women,” so such attacks remained persistently worthwhile through economic transformations that undermined many other legitimating practices. Their diversity simultaneously may have prevented women from organizing effectively in defense of their interests as women, like women did in some Nigerian Yoruba and Igbo communities.

Overcoming such deep-rooted antagonism is a complicated process that will probably take a long time and a combination of many different strategies and cultural changes. On the other hand, the complicated historical dynamics that constructed the underlying mutual distrust also support a more encouraging interpretation. It took just such a complex interaction of many factors to bring the situation to this pass, so there is a precedent for future change being equally complex. Market commodity groups represent neither an eternal tradition nor an imitation of modernity, but an indigenous innovation. If their recent configuration responds to specific late twentieth century conditions, this suggests that traders can and will continue to generate creative shifts in their organizational practices in response to twenty-first century changes in their political, economic and cultural environment. Such future innovations will be needed to preserve the resilience that has been so conspicuous and valuable in their past.

In Ghana, open marketplaces remain the primary economic institution delivering the basic foods and consumer goods without which urban residents (and most rural communities) cannot survive. Marketplaces revive so rapidly after periods of violent crisis not just because traders can deploy a priceless cultural repertoire of transactional and organizational praxis, but because market systems can and do change swiftly. The historical record suggests that public policy towards marketplaces needs to accommodate this flexibility and continuity in supporting traders’ access to public space, customers, transport, storage facilities, credit, sanitation, and other social infrastructure.

Traders contribute best to sustainable economies as active participants creatively meeting contemporary challenges, not as folkloric anachronisms in out-of-the-way preserves. This requires recognizing traders’ organizations as legitimate stakeholders in urban and regional

planning, and including their leaders in all relevant consultation processes. Such inclusion needs to take culturally and historically appropriate forms, but this does not reduce its importance. As a general principle, full inclusion would mean a substantial step forward in the often volatile and destructive relations between traders and their governments in many parts of the world.

## Notes

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1. De Marees, 1602; Huxley, 1954; and Little, 1973 are exemplary.
  2. For analysis of the gender conflicts over trade in various Latin American cultures, see Bunster and Cheney (1985); Seligmann (1989); and Weismantel (2001). Further analysis on Ghanaian gender conflicts is presented in Clark (2001); Robertson (1983); Allman (2000); and Mikell (1989).
  3. The political economy of informal trade has attracted distinguished analysts over many years: Geertz (1963), Mintz (1971); Bromley (1978); and de Soto (1989) offer classic generalizations. Case studies were collected in Bromley and Gerry (1979), Guyer (1987); and Clark (1988). Monographs include MacGaffey (1987) on Zaire, Robertson (1997) on Kenya and, on the South American Andes, Babb (1989), Weismantel (2001), and Seligmann (2004).
  4. More details on these research methods are included in the thesis and a subsequent book (Clark 1984; Clark 1994). I would like to thank the ESRC (UK), the ILO, the SSRC, the Fulbright Commission, and the US Dept of Education for funding various of these fieldwork opportunities.
  5. I am especially grateful to historians Gareth Austin, Larry Yarak, and Thomas McCaskie for directing my attention to valuable files.
  6. De Marees, 1602; Little, 1973.
  7. See Clark (1994) for more detailed analysis of commodity groups, drawn from my fieldnotes of that period. Due to the illegality of many of these activities at the time and the recent return to office of the political party linked to that regime, personally identifiable examples and quotations cannot be published.
  8. Hopkins, 1973, p. 79ff.
  9. Hopkins, 1973, pp. 87-88; Hymer, 1970, p. 39.
  10. DeMarees, 1602, p. 396; Dike and Ekejuiba, 1990.
  11. Hopkins 1973, pp. 90-108; Harrop, 1964, pp. 29-31.
  12. Wilks, 1975, p. 111.
  13. Wilks, 1975, pp. 197, 268-9; Akoto interview, 1980.
  14. Priestley, 1969, p. 157.
  15. Priestley, 1969.
  16. NAK1.
  17. Mikell, 1989.
  18. NAK6; NAK7.
  19. NAK8.

20. NAA1.
21. NAK1.
22. NAK7.
23. NAA4; Kay, 1972, p. 62.
24. Hopkins, 1965, p. 135.
25. Howard, 1978, p. 75.
26. NAA6.
27. Drake and Lacy, 1966, pp. 72-91.
28. Allman, 1993.
29. Sudarkasa, 1979; Mikell, 1989.
30. See Clark (1988 and 1994) for observations of the November 1978 and March 1979 events, and more traders’ narratives of earlier episodes.
31. See Clark, 2001.
32. See Clark, 1989b.
33. See Robertson, 1983.
34. Hart, 2006.
35. From a letter to the editor, *Daily Graphic* 3/22/79.
36. For more detailed analysis of the AFRC and PNDC periods, see Robertson (1983) and Clark (1988).
37. Clark (1989a) compares food shortages in 1979 and 1983 to regular dry seasons.
38. Incidents are described in Clark (1988) from fieldnotes.
39. Clark and Manuh, 1991.
40. Recorded from PAMSCAD posters, 1984.
41. Owusu, 1992.
42. King, 1999.
43. Field interview, September 2007.
44. GNA 3/1/06.
45. GNA reports from 3/1/06 to 3/4/06 were compared with oral reports from a participating traders’ organization leader to prepare this summary account of events.
46. GNA 3/7/06.

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